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The Luxton Expulsion!

WHY W. F. LUXTON HAS BEEN EXPELLED
FROM THE FREE PRESS, AND DESPOILED
OF THE FRUITS OF HIS
LIFE'S WORK.

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20-3-26

MR. W. F. LUXTON IS RETIRED

Free Press Board of Directors Pass a
Resolution Having That Effect.

editor of the paper, as a
bonus.

LIBRARY THE SUN DEAL.

Shortly after the *Call* deal the C. P. R.
advanced \$40,000. Mr. Luxton, it is said,

her History of the "Call" and "Sun"
Deals in Days Gone
By.

(From Tribune, Sept 23rd.)

Mr. W. F. Luxton is no longer editor-in-
chief of the *Free Press*.

This fact was learned by THE TRIBUNE
Friday afternoon. There is an interest
history connected with the *Free Press*,
the most sensational features of it date
to period about five years ago, when
Alex. Macdonald, ex-mayor of the city,
out his interest. Sir Donald A. Smith
advanced about \$26,000 to Mr. Luxton
took therefore 800 shares of *Free Press*
as collateral, giving Mr. Luxton five
in which to redeem the stock, interest
charged at the rate of 6 per cent. At
the time Mr. Macdonald sold out
Free Press bought out the *Call*, then
Conservative organ, paying therefor
\$100,000, and a sum to Mr. Acton Burrows,



W. F. LUXTON.

carried through this deal, and took the
money with the understanding between
himself and President Van Horne, of the

C. P. R., that he would not be interfered with in any way and that the policy of the paper would not be changed; further, that he would remain in control of the same as before, the only stipulation being that he was not to run down the country.

Matters went on smoothly for some time, and so far as can be learned there was no effort at interfering, except at the time of the last general elections, when it is said Mr. Van Horne desired to have the Dominion candidates warmly supported by what people generally recognized as the C.P.R. organ. This Mr. Luxton is said to have declined to do, as it would be an endorsement of the National Policy, something in which he did not believe and did not consider in the best interests of the country, especially the Northwest. However, the Free Press did not support the Opposition candidates, showing that the hidden hand had some influence, which, coupled with Mr. Luxton's dislike of the Local Government accounted for the policy of the paper during that exciting period.

FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS.

So far as THE TRIBUNE reporter learned there was no specific instruction or effort to interfere with the policy of the paper until recently. The Sir Donald A. Smith option expired on the 6th of Sept. last. Mr. Luxton is said to have had almost completed arrangements, but failed for the time being, owing to the general financial depression. He asked for an extension, if only for a few months, which he was led to believe would be granted.

Without any intimation a meeting of the directors was called on Friday and the by-law appointing Mr. Luxton and defining his duties was cancelled and a resolution passed declaring the position of managing director, held by Mr. Luxton, vacant. It is said that at this meeting there were present Messrs. John Mather, G. A. Muttieberry and J. B. Somerset.

INTEREST IN THE DEAL.

On Friday evening a rumor became current on the streets that a change had taken place in the Free Press by which Mr. W. F. Luxton had severed his connection with that paper. The rumor spread like wildfire and attracted the most intense interests in all circles. The knowing ones winked at one another about two weeks ago when Mr. Moynaux St. John, the well known eastern newspaper man, registered at the Manitoba and gave very general answers to the questions of interviewers. His visit was to look

into matters in the west in the interest of the C. P. R. Others thought that while this was quite true yet Mr. St. John had other strings to his bow. Friday evening a TRIBUNE reporter was stopped by a gentleman who said, "There's something in the wind; two prominent members of the Free Press staff and a well known supporter, Mr. Hugh Sutherland, have been seen in very earnest conversation and at a point outside of the offices of the paper. But from other sources came more definite information, and all pointed to the fact that a radical change had come over the Free Press, and that Mr. Luxton's connection had been severed. Prominent members of the Free Press company dropped curious hints to their friends, which in the present state of affairs meant a great deal.

On Saturday Messrs. Mather, Somerset and St. John were observed in conversation in a corner of the rotunda of the Manitoba, and the thrashing about and opening and folding of a copy of the Free Press left no doubt as to what was the object of their talk. Whatever may have been the tend of their talk they appeared to be well satisfied with the world in general, and it looked as if things were moving not altogether out of harmony with their wishes. As they separated Mr. Mather was approached by a TRIBUNE reporter, and after a few words about his trip to the west, he was asked if Mr. Luxton's successor had been appointed. Mr. Mather did not appear to be at all surprised at the question, but he answered that he was not just in a position to speak on the matter. "In fact," said Mr. Mather, "things are not in a position for me to say anything, and if the matter is now on the street Mr. Luxton must have told it. I cannot tell what he or his friends may have said, and of course I cannot answer for them."

"Well, is it true that Mr. Luxton has severed his connection with the paper?"

"It is true and it is not true. In fact, it is impossible for me to say anything about it. There will be a meeting this afternoon when the matter will be settled, and until that time I really cannot say anything. That is the state of affairs at present."

MR. ST. JOHN FOR EDITOR.

Nobody knows who will be editor, but everybody suggests Mr. St. John. The journalist of many exciting campaigns smiled in a knowing way when questioned by a TRIBUNE reporter. He fenced himself ably, however, and when the question as to his knowledge came out point blank, he said "I cannot say that I don't know something of who will be editor, but what I know I am not in a position to make public."

THE FREE PRESS CHANGE.

Mr. Holyoake St. John Appointed Editor-in-Chief.

(From Tribune, Sept. 15th.)

On Saturday evening it became known that at a meeting held during the afternoon Mr. St. John had been appointed editor in place of Mr. Luxton. Mr. St. John admitted the fact to his friends, and the Free Press is now already under his management. He left for Montreal on Saturday night's train. The announcement made in Saturday's TRIBUNE was the sole topic of conversation on the streets and in the rotundas of the hotels. Knots were to be seen gathered here and there discussing the all absorbing theme and speculating as to what would come next. The general impression was that Mr. Luxton would make some sort of a legal fight to regain control of the 800 shares of stock held by him until Friday. It is felt that what has already occurred is but the beginning of a series of surprises that may be expected in connection with the matter.

Mr. Luxton's name has been removed from the editorial page of the Free Press.

MR. LUXTON'S EXPULSION.

A Letter From the Ex-Editor-in-Chief Himself.

An Interesting Story of Inside Free Press Affairs—St. John is Editor.

To the Editor of The Tribune:

SIR,—From whatever source you got your information, of which I am entirely ignorant, the report you gave on Saturday of my expulsion from the Free Press is almost strictly accurate, but it is not the whole story, nor am I now going to inflict that upon your readers; indeed I could not if I would, for the narrative would make a considerable volume. Perhaps, however, you will be generous enough to give me space for a few lines in addition to those you have already published upon the matter in question, so that pending a complete exposure,

which will come in due time, the public may have something of a correct idea of what to expect. I shall, therefore, make only a few rather bald but sweeping statements, which, when future occasion renders practicable, I shall support by minute particulars.

For twenty-one years my whole effort has been devoted to the up-building of the Free Press, which I had determined to accomplish by doing right to the Northwest, according to my best judgment, no matter what should intervene, or perish in the attempt.

In this pursuit what you have related came to pass with parties connected with the Canadian Pacific Railway; and it is exactly as you say, I had the assurance that I was to be left absolutely to myself as to the policy of the paper. The deal with them was purely of a legitimate business character—so, at least, I understood it, or it would not have been consummated. At the time, the Free Press was opposing the Provincial Government as strongly as it has ever opposed it since, and so was the Canadian Pacific Railway, and no abatement was even suggested.

Notwithstanding the assurance that I alone was to control the editorial policy of the paper, when the Dominion general elections came on, as you mention, the parties referred to undertook to dictate the course the Free Press should pursue; and that was one which would certainly have defeated the end aimed at, and, as well, have properly reduced the paper to a position beneath public contempt. I declined to accept the dictation; but, inasmuch, as my views as to what was ultimately desirable in respect to the elections were not very wide of those of the would-be dictators, the Free Press, in pursuing its own course, escaped any manifestation of displeasure from that quarter.

Shortly after, the Provincial Government granted a bonus of some \$160,000 to the Canadian Pacific Railway for the Souris extension; and then began the friendship of the C. P. R. for the Government, which has been ever since manifested. Subsequently, some \$70,000 has been given that company as a provincial bonus on the Pipestone extension; and what is presently under consideration is a bonus for a Dauphin extension. Beyond a doubt these are the considerations for which the C. P. R. converted its hostility to the Local Government into friendship; and besides, all the circumstances, with which I am painfully familiar, convince me that it is part of the arrangement that the Free Press shall be brought into line with the Government. To that position, under my management,

it positively never could be brought.

Then there has been a constant friction between the C.P.R. management and the Free Press on the question of freight rates. The former was very much irritated by the insistence of the Free Press that transportation rates on grain are a terrible burden on the farmers and that there was no competition between the C.P.R. and the N. P. R.

The consequence of these things, so far as the C.P.R. people, who had become financially interested in the Free Press, and the board of directors of the Free Press company, controlled by them, are legally able to do it, the fruits of my twenty-one years' work, all of which are in the Free Press, have been confiscated, and besides that, I am turned penniless into the street without an hour's warning, notwithstanding that my engagement is manifestly a yearly one and binding on both parties, the company and myself, until the middle of April next, unless sooner terminated by mutual consent. To be sure, the law will rectify me in this; but what of those people who drive me to such recourse? As I have stated, it was clearly understood—expressed in words by themselves—when I made the \$40,000 deal with C. P. R. people, that I could run the paper just as I pleased, except not to injure the country. I was responsible to them only so far as business results were concerned; and in that respect the outcome of my last year's management will ever stand by me. The annual statement for that year (1892), as presented by the directors and adopted by the shareholders, shows a net gain from the business of \$15,990.60—just a shade under nine per cent on every dollar of capital invested in the concern, by stock (at par), loan or otherwise. But that would not suffice; nothing short of the Free Press being an instrument to aid, directly and indirectly, C. P. R. schemes, meritorious or the reverse, and approve of C. P. R. policy, good, bad and indifferent, would satisfy; and, simply because I would not accede to such a line of conduct for the Free Press I am where I am to day, so far as those who have overpowered me know or care, without

as much as a ten cent piece; and my place upon my beloved Free Press—yes, I say beloved, because I loved it better than my life—will obviously be filled by passive persons, necessarily responsive to every behest of the Canadian Pacific railway, it having been proven, at a terrible expense to me, that no other sort will do. No better proof that this will be the case is possible than the fact that my successor as editor-in-chief is Mr. Molyneux St. John (a gentleman, by the way, for whom I have always had the highest respect), directly from the C. P. R. general offices in Montreal. He is simply being transferred from one C. P. R. department to what is to be another.

When the board of directors deposed me, it was all so sudden and unexpected that I could scarcely collect my thoughts, but I found words to express these ideas: I had been despoiled of my life's work, all of which had gone as a sacrifice to my manhood—the only capital left me. If, I added, they or their principals had hired an assassin to slaughter the dependent members of my family and myself, whatever in law, their conduct would have been less cruel.

It has been a costly one to me, but incidentally the complete demonstration has been made of the utter groundlessness of two charges that have been levelled at the Free Press for years, and no doubt with some effect. One of these was that the Catholic hierarchy had advanced the \$40,000 to the Free Press for the purchase of the Sun, and that the Free Press was the organ of the Catholic church, and for that reason. The *expose* that has taken place has completely knocked out that story. The other was that the Free Press was the organ of the C. P. R. It is now abundantly clear that such was not the case during my regime, inasmuch as it is shown that it has cost me everything, in the sense of property, that I have in the world for resolution and effectively resisting, as I had a perfect right to do, its being such organ.

Thanking you, Mr. Editor, for the space I have occupied, I am, yours truly,

W. F. LUXTON.

Winnipeg, Sept. 25.

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FROM THE LIBRARY

